

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

A MANUAL OF MODERN SURGERY for the Use of Students and Practitioners. By JOHN B. ROBERTS, A.M., M.D., Professor of Surgery in the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania; Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in the Philadelphia Polyclinic; Lecturer in Anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania. With Five Hundred and One Illustrations. Philadelphia, Lea Brothers and Co. J. H. Chambers and Co., 914 Locust Street, St. Louis, Mo.

In this work of eight hundred pages, the author has endeavored to give to the profession, in a condensed form, the doctrines and procedures of Modern Surgery. He has made it a work devoted more especially to the practice than to the theory of surgery. The consideration of untried innovations, expedients of doubtful value, traditional and historic questions, has been given no place. The operative procedures recommended are those which have been adopted by the largest number of practical surgeons. Aside from the written surgery of which the author has availed himself, his own large experience has added many valuable features to the work. It contains many practical points in diagnosis, which renders it the more valuable to the practitioner; and the systemization which pervades the whole work, together with its perspicuity, enhances its value as a student's manual. There are not described a number of theories and expedients of variable value, from which the reader may choose; the scope of the work being limited, those are given which seem to the author best; the others are merely mentioned or briefly outlined. He has chosen for the reader, and in these selections has exercised general good judgment.

The style is pleasing. There is a tendency to eliminate objectionable terms, and to Anglicize the foreign words used in surgery. English endings, are attached to the plural of Latin nouns, resulting in such

hybrids as "fibromas" and "coccuses." The terms "contre coup," "en bissac" "en masse" and the like, savoring of pedantry and affectation, are given their English translations. Proper name nomenclature is opposed, and the names "Colles' fracture" and "Pott's fracture" are discarded as useless and confusing.

The whole work is divided into two parts, which are subdivided into twenty-seven chapters. Part I. is devoted to "General Surgical Pathology, or Principles of Surgery." In this the demonstrated and accepted theory of the relation of microorganisms to disease is clearly set forth. The subject of ulcers is briefly treated. No classification is given, excepting the division into "healthy" and "unhealthy." The author does not think it necessary to give a distinctive name to each; and the treatment is rather general. The term *sapræmia* is used to signify ptomaine poisoning; *septicæmia* is defined as infection by putrefactive organisms; and the symptoms of *septicæmia* and *pyæmia* are grouped together. The author acknowledges a discrepancy of opinions on these subjects. Green's classification of tumors is adopted. The subject is well treated, and with abundant illustrations. The word "cancer" is used but once, and then only to say that the term should not be retained in surgical literature.

In speaking of wounds the author states his belief that delayed shock is an impossibility, and that cases so named are instances of *septicæmia*, fat embolism, or some imperfectly understood condition. In the treatment of wounds he insists upon free drainage, and the most rigid antiseptis. The straight bayonet needle is nearly always preferred to the curved variety, and no allusion is made to the Hagedorn. As might be expected, the aseptic metallic handle figures prominently among the knives and other instruments. Little copper boxes, in which the instruments can be stored for transportation, are commended. These with the instruments can be conveniently heated just before an operation.

The treatment of the subject of anæsthesia shows that the data have been obtained from clinical observation. It is assumed from the beginning that ether is far preferable to chloroform, and the relative merits of the two are not discussed. The advantages claimed for

chloroform over ether, says the author, are much overrated because of the frequent improper administration of the latter. Chloroform is quite ignored, and no indications for its use are given. The author believes in the hypodermatic injection of morphine with atropine about fifteen minutes before the anæsthesia is begun. He is also in accord with the recent teaching, that untoward heart symptoms occurring during ether anæsthetization should not be met with alcohol; nor does he believe that alcohol should be administered before etherization for the purpose of averting shock. There is food for thought in the suggestion that some of the deaths attributed to anæsthetics may be due to the entrance of air into the veins during the course of operation.

The principles or fundamental laws of operative surgery are given in nine terse sentences, which surgeons may observe with profit. In the last of these is the warning that suppuration in an operation wound, in tissues in which originally there was no suppuration, is usually due to improper precautions on the part of the surgeon or his assistants.

The last chapter of the first section is devoted to plastic surgery, in which the principles of that reparative art are well set forth.

Part II, which comprises more than three fourths of the whole work, is devoted to "Special Surgical Pathology, or Practice of Surgery." Each of the fifteen chapters in this section is worthy of comment, but space will only permit allusion to a few salient features, the points which impress the reviewer as especially worthy of note. The author seems always to have in mind possible specific cause of obscure diseases. Such expressions as the following are often met. In speaking of encephalitis, he says: "All chronic cases should be subjected to antisyphilitic treatment, as should all cases of supposed brain tumor." The term concussion of the brain is rejected, and in its stead contusion or laceration is used. Inasmuch as functional disturbances are due to organic changes, concussion, which is a vibration and not a condition of disease, gives rise to symptoms as a cause of contusion or laceration. Among the causes of cerebral compression, tumors, for some reason, are not enumerated. The author does not believe that the general surgeon is possessed of all the available knowledge pertaining to sur-

gery, and occasionally suggests that this or that be left to the specialist in the particular branch. In the description of operative procedures, the surgeon is told not only what to expect in the natural course of things, but he is also frequently warned as to what possibilities of the case he should have in mind before undertaking the operation, and what conditions he should be prepared to encounter.

In the treatment of acute anæmia precedence is given to direct transfusion toward the heart over the more satisfactory and simple method of saline infusion. The former is described and illustrated, whereas the latter is barely mentioned. Whatever may be the author's reason for giving this preference, the prevalent surgical practice, at least in this country, shows the greatest favor for the infusion of saline solution. There is an especially practical chapter devoted to the control of hæmorrhage. A number of rules are laid down to guide the surgeon in the arrest of arterial hæmorrhage by the use of the ligature. Under each rule are the reasons for its use and a number of exceptions. In this condensed form are given principles which, less concisely expressed, would occupy many pages. Styptics are regarded as useless agents for controlling such bleeding as is met in general surgery; pressure and ligation are considered the only necessary hæmostatics.

No section of the work is more worthy of note than that on aneurism. In this chapter the author not only shows a thorough appreciation of the subject, but also an ability to impart his knowledge in a most available form. As in other chapters he endeavors to eliminate misused expressions, so in this does he refuse to recognize "dissecting aneurism."

The terms simple and compound fracture are rejected as misleading and not self explanatory, and in their places the words "closed fracture" and "open fracture" are used; which on the whole seems a change worthy of general adoption. In this abundantly illustrated chapter are frequent allusions to Stimson's work, from which a number of cuts are borrowed. The author believes that free drainage is an essential factor in the treatment of open fractures, though in these days we see many put up snugly in plaster, and left for weeks in their original dressings.

He trephines in cranial fractures more heroically than is generally taught, as is indicated in his syllabus of treatment of such injuries. We are bound, however, to respect the dictum of Dr. Roberts on this subject. He holds that trephining properly performed is in itself so free from danger that in cases of doubt it had better be resorted to rather than allow the patient to run the risk of subsequent untoward complications. The surgeon is exhorted to become a neurologist to the degree of familiarizing himself with cerebral localization. Fracture of the clavicle he treats by dorsal recumbency for ten days, and then ordinary immobilization bandage. This seems a happy modification of two methods. Few patients will submit to the irksome position of recumbency during the whole period of healing only with the hope of getting a better cosmetic effect. It is recommended that fractures of the lower extremity of the humerus be generally treated in the extended position, special attention being called to the normal angle of abduction in the forearm. Treatment of fracture of the patella by wiring is briefly dismissed as unjustifiable. Nor is secondary wiring after fracture or rupture of the fibrous union recommended. Suffice it to say that the objection to this procedure has arisen from imperfect antisepsis, and that the surgeon who refrains from wiring the patella acknowledges his inability to perform an aseptic operation. Surely, there is such a thing as asepsis; asepsis is within the range of surgical possibilities.

The chapters on diseases and injuries to the joints, which include dislocations and excisions, written by Dr. Morton, maintain the general high standard of the work. The essence of the subject of hip-joint disease is found in the article on that subject. In the treatment of downward dislocations of the head of the humerus the method of Kocher is wanting. Had this method been given so much space might not have been devoted to traction and anæsthesia.

The chapter on pelvic and abdominal surgery contains much sound doctrine. Holding, as he does, asepsis in supreme regard, Dr. Roberts unhesitatingly opens the peritoneal cavity. "If doubt exists as to the propriety of opening the abdomen for purposes of discovering and repairing visceral damage, it is usually wise to give the patient the

benefit of the doubt and operate." For closing the abdominal wound the use of interrupted sutures, passing through the whole thickness of the abdominal wall and including the peritoneum, is considered the best plan. In the after-treatment opium is withheld as much as possible, and incipient peritonitis is considered an indication for the administration of salts. He believes that active peritoneal inflammation will not often occur if when the first symptoms appear abstinence from opium is enforced, and saline purgatives are administered. Several illustrations in this chapter are borrowed from the work of Greig Smith, from which the author occasionally quotes.

The subject of hernia is well dealt with. The author is in sympathy with the growing belief that radical operations for the cure of hernia do not, as a rule, effect a radical cure.

With reference to a mooted question he says, "of all the operations proposed for the radical cure of the more severe cases of hæmorrhoidal disease, the best probably is excision and cauterization "

For the treatment of prolapse of the rectum he gives his own method.

The chapter on amputations, for which the author in his preface states he is indebted to Dr. Morton, is sound and concise.

The fact that this work is eminently practical can not be too strongly emphasized. It is modern; and as its teaching is that generally accepted and such that affords little opportunity for discussion, it will be lasting. It is clear and concise, yet full. The book is entitled to a place in modern surgical literature.

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A RETROSPECT OF SURGERY, January, 1886—January, 1890. Prepared by FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD, M.D., C.M., Surgeon to the Montreal General Hospital, etc. Montreal Gazette Printing Company, 1890, 8vo. p. 261. J. H. Chambers & Co., 914 Locust Street, St. Louis, Mo.

This work is a reprint of the valuable reports on current surgical literature made during the last four years by Professor Shepherd in the *Montreal Medical and Surgical Journal*. The abstracts are succinct